



Real news from the streets

3.29.2013

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to voice concern on House Bill 2963 that would prohibit the state from preempting a city's authority to control or regulate the use of its sidewalks.

We believe that this bill is unnecessary and will allow for special interest groups to create legislation to profile and target people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

The City of Portland, including community groups, has not yet created a formal process that would determine that this kind of bill is necessary for regulating the use of sidewalks.

This bill is currently being advocated for by the Portland Business Alliance who has historically advocated for draconian sidewalk laws that have shown to overwhelmingly target people experiencing homelessness. Over the past decade using laws that regulate sidewalks has time and again been ruled unconstitutional and has divided our community.

At no time has any law regulating sidewalks in Portland shown to detour or address the systemic problems the city faces concerning homelessness and poverty in public spaces, specifically on sidewalks.

We believe before considering such a bill that the community should come together and determine whether such a bill, or law is necessary.

Sincerely,

Israel Bayer, Executive Director, Street Roots
Monica Beemer, Executive Director, Sisters Of The Road
Rev. Kate Lore, Social Justice Minister, First Unitarian Church of Portland
Rev. Chuck Currie, Minister, Sunnyside Church and University Park Church